

VZCZCXYZ0000
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHC #9685 3151955
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 101950Z NOV 08
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS 6163

UNCLAS STATE 119685

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED - PLEASE HANDLE ACCORDINGLY

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: CASC PREL SY

SUBJECT: DIPNOTE ON CONSULAR NOTIFICATION AND TIMELY
ACCESS TO AMERICAN CITIZENS

¶1. Department instructs Post to deliver the following
message as a diplomatic note.

¶2. BEGIN TEXT:

(Insert complimentary opening language.)
The Embassy of the United States wishes to remind the
Government of Syria that under Article 36
of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, the
Government of Syria has an obligation to notify
the United States Embassy, which provides consular services
to U.S. citizens in Syria, when a detained
American citizen requests to speak with a U.S. consular
officer. The Embassy requests the Government
of the Syrian Arab Republic notify the U.S. Embassy in
Damascus promptly when an American citizen has
been arrested and calls on the Government of Syria to
provide U.S. consular officers prompt access
to detained American citizens, as required by Article 36.

(Insert appropriate complimentary closing.)

END TEXT.

¶3. Background: On October 8, following extensive media
coverage of the disappearance of journalists
Taylor Luck and Holli Chmela, Embassy Damascus and the
Department learned that these two Americans had been
in Syrian custody since October 1. Upon learning of their
detention, Embassy Damascus immediately proceeded
to arrange consular access. Shortly after their detention on
October 1, the two requested to speak with
Embassy Damascus as well as with their families. Under
Article 36 of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations,
the Syrian government should have notified Embassy Damascus
immediately. In an October 16 meeting with the Syrian
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, CDA Connelly expressed concerns
with delayed notification and access to detained
American citizens.

¶4. Point of contact: please contact NEA/ELA Allison Monz at
monzam@state.gov and CA/OCS/ACS/NESCA Jo-Ann Hunter
at hunterjl@state.gov when the diplomatic note has been
delivered and for additional information.

RICE